

Victoria A. Harden

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Victoria A. Harden retired in January 2006 as Director of the Office of NIH History and the Stetten Museum at the National Institutes of Health, an office she created during the 1986-87 observance of the NIH centennial. She continues to serve the office as a Special Volunteer.

Dr. Harden took her B.A. and Ph.D. degrees in American History at Emory University (1966; 1983) and conducted much of her dissertation research as a Fellow at the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution. During a post-doctoral year at the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, she was supported by a grant from the National Library of Medicine and completed work on *Inventing the NIH: Federal Biomedical Research Policy, 1887-1937* (Johns Hopkins, 1986).

From 1984-1986, Dr. Harden was on the staff of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), researching and writing *Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever: History of a Twentieth-Century Disease* (Johns Hopkins, 1990). It won the 1991 Henry Adams prize of the Society for History in the Federal Government for the best book published in 1990 about the history of the federal government.

In 1989 and 1993 she organized conferences on the history of AIDS. The proceedings were published as *AIDS and the Historian* (IOS Press, 1991) and *AIDS and the Public Debate: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (IOS Press, 1995). In June 2001, she launched a website commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the first publication about AIDS: [In Their Own Words: NIH Researchers Recall the Early Years of AIDS](#). In 2012, she published *AIDS at 30: A History*, an overview of the epidemic emphasizing the response of the medical community—physicians and nurses, public health officials, and biomedical researchers—to AIDS.

Dr. Harden also oversaw the creation and development of the Stetten Museum at NIH, which collects and exhibits biomedical research instruments and memorabilia related to the National Institutes of Health. A series of exhibits prepared for the NIH centennial, titled "Windows into NIH History" won the 1989 John Wesley Powell prize for historic display about the history of federal activities. The Office of NIH History website, at <http://history.nih.gov>, now makes many of the exhibits available in a virtual format.

Dr. Harden is an active member of many professional societies. She has served on the executive councils of the American Historical Association and the American Association for the History of Medicine. In 1993-94 she served as president of the Washington Society for the History of Medicine and in 1998-99 as president of the Society for History in the Federal Government. In 2006 she was awarded the Herbert Feis prize for outstanding contributions to public history by the American Historical Association, and in 2007 the Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Association for the History of Medicine.

Dr. Harden was interviewed in the Fall 2013 issue of the [Federalist](#). Benjamin Guterman kindly provided a copy of the "The History Professional" interview with Dr. Harden to the Office of NIH History.